



## Commonwealth of Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet

**Steven L. Beshear, Governor**

**Leonard K. Peters, Secretary**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: Lynn True  
1-502-564-4496**

### **Kentucky's State Forests Attain Certification for Sustainable Management**

**FRANKFORT, Ky.** (Dec. 3, 2012) – Six state forest properties (Green River, Kentenia, Kentucky Ridge, Pennyryle, Peterson, and Tygarts) owned by the Kentucky Division of Forestry (KDF) and four state forest properties jointly-owned by KDF and the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (Big Rivers, Knobs, Marion County Wildlife Management Area and Marrowbone) were recently awarded American Tree Farm certification through the Center for Forest and Wood Certification's Independently Managed Group. The properties – totaling 43,327 acres – are owned and managed for the purpose of recreation, wildlife management, timber production, and demonstration of sound forest management methods.

The new designation indicates that the state is using best management practices to keep the forests healthy and productive. Forest certification is also a means of notifying consumers that a wood or paper product comes from forests managed according to a set of environmental and social standards. The "certification" label on a wood product is much like the "organically grown" sticker on produce and is meant to address a growing demand by consumers who want to purchase products that come from well-managed forests that are sustainably and legally harvested.

"Tree farm certification recognizes that our state forests are well-managed and our work on state forests is verified by independent third party auditors," said Leah MacSwords, director of KDF. "This designation not only recognizes our management efforts, but also helps Kentucky's forest products stay competitive in a market where certification standards are desired."

“Certification with the American Tree Farm System® (ATFS) assures that Kentucky’s state forests are meeting the highest standards of sustainability. The partnership between ATFS and KDF’s leadership will help keep Kentucky’s forests healthy and productive for generations to come,” said Bettina Ring, senior vice president for family forests at the American Forest Foundation (AFF). The American Tree Farm System is a program of AFF.”

“The certification of Kentucky’s state forests with the Center for Forest and Wood Certification’s American Tree Farm System group indicates KDF’s commitment to sustainable management of the Commonwealth’s forests,” said Dr. Jeff Stringer, University of Kentucky forestry specialist and director of operations at the Center for Forest and Wood Certification. “While certainly the division has undertaken excellent management of our state forests for some time, the third party certification that it has recently undergone acknowledges this fact.”

Criteria for certification involve a wide range of environmental issues including everything from minimizing the use of chemical pesticides to keeping forests diverse. Reforestation, harvesting methods, maintaining water quality, and managing for the conservation of wildlife and plant species are all aspects of forest management that are required. Once a property has been certified, an annual inspection is conducted to ensure that the standards are maintained. The owner must also reapply for certification every five years.

KDF and the American Tree Farm System also provide tools to family woodland owners to improve stewardship on their lands. More information can be found at <http://forestry.ky.gov> and <http://mylandplan.org/>. For more information about forest certification, please visit <http://forestcertificationcenter.org/>.

*Editors Note:*

*The Kentucky Division of Forestry, headquartered in Frankfort, manages nine district offices with forestry staff assigned to every county in Kentucky for the purpose of providing services to the citizens of the Commonwealth. The agency’s mission is to protect and enhance Kentucky’s forest resources through a public informed of the environmental, social and economic importance of forests.*

*The American Tree Farm System® is a network of 89,000 family forest owners sustainably managing 27 million acres of forestland. It is the largest and oldest sustainable woodland system in America, internationally recognized, meeting strict third-party certification standards.*